

WELCOME ADDRESS

By

Sri P. C. Bose, Chairman, Golden Jubilee Committee.

It is a great honour for me to welcome you, sir, Minister for Commerce and Industries, West Bengal ; Dr. B. D. Nag Chaudhury, Member, Planning Commission and the delegates and engineers who have graced this auspicious Golden Jubilee Celebration of The Association of Engineers. Our Chief Guest to-day, to inaugurate this function, is Sri Sushil Kumar Dhara, who is well known in Indian politics for his sacrifices for attaining independence.

In his young days he joined the Congress under the late lamented leader B. N. Sasmal of Midnapore. During the Quit India movement of 1942 he was chosen as the leader of the lightning squad of Midnapore for disrupting communication etc, of this district. The then British Government declared a reward of ten thousand rupees for his arrest which, he successfully eluded till he voluntarily surrendered himself. He was jailed for ten years.

He was Minister for Commerce and Industries in the first United Front Government. He is a keen promoter of good relationship between the management and the workers and he feels that without this cordial relationship Industries cannot thrive in this State.

His emphasis is on Agro-Industries and his ideas are not only to promote industries in Calcutta area but also to set up industries like Card Board industry, Pharmaceutical Industries in North Bengal.

The inaugural session is being presided by Dr. B. D. Nag Chaudhury, Member, Planning Commission, whose brilliant lecture on Enterprise and Professional Societies we are going to hear shortly.

On an occasion like this, it will, perhaps, not be out of place to say something about the origin and growth of the Association of Engineers. Sometimes in 1919, before the birth of the Institution of Engineers, our Association was formed. The glory goes to the old boys of Shibpur Engineering College who met and decided that there should be an organisational set-up on the same lines as the British Institution of Civil Engineers, but the term "Institution" should be replaced by the term "Association". This proposal was unanimously accepted and a plenipotentiary committee was formed to draft the Memorandum of the Association. And from the very beginning it attracted engineers from not only Bengal, but also Burma, Assam, Nepal, Orissa, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh.

Sometimes later, graduates from Glasgow University joined the Association as they were frustrated to find that foreigners with much inferior qualifications could vie with them and secure jobs in preference to Indian engineers with better academic qualifications.

The constitution of the Association was drawn up on the same lines as the institution of civil engineers of England. The main objects were :

- 1) Safeguarding & promoting the status of engineers ;
- 2) Research for further development of Engineering.
- 3) Dissemination of Engineering knowledge and exchange of thoughts through journals.

In 1949, an application was submitted to the Government of India for an award of charter, to which the Government made a counter proposal for merging our Association with the Institution of Engineers (India). This suggestion did not find favour with the members of our Association, with the result that it did not get the charter and its membership could not be used as equivalent to our Engineering degree of various universities as in the case of the Institution of Engineers.

In the year 1968, the Association took the initiative for convening the first All India Engineers Conference which was a great success.

Fifty years may appear too long a period, but in the march of time fifty years is not a long stride. And today, as our Association scintillates not only with Engineers employed by the Govt, but also Engineers from Business Houses and other establishments as well. But our relentless struggle will continue with the good-will of distinguished sons of India like you and the sympathy of our people. We welcome you all to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of the Association of Engineers.